DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 322 639 EA 022 167

TITLE	Standards for Quality Elementary & Middle Schools, Kindergarten through Eighth Grade. Revised Edition.
INSTITUTION	National Association of Elementary School Principals, Alexandria, VA.
PUB DATE	90
NOTE	65p.; For previous edition, see ED 260 518.
AVAILABLE FROM	Publications, National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1680 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 ($14.95, nonmembers; $10.95, members).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Check Lists; *Educational Assessment; Educational Environment; Educational Improvement; Educational Objectives; *Educational Quality; Elementary Education; Elementary School Curriculum; *Elementary Schools; Inservice Teacher Education; Instructional Improvement; Kindergarten; *Middle Schools; *School Effectiveness; School Supervision; *Standards
IDENTIFIERS	Indicators

ABSTRACT

This document states the position of the National Association of Elementary School Principals regarding the essential ingredients of a fine elementary or middle school. It combines the findings of current research on effective schooling with the practical, onsite experience of working principals. After a brief introduction, these standards are grouped into seven major categories: organization, leadership, curriculum, instruction, training and development, school climate, and evaluation and assessment. Contained within these seven categories are 21 "standards of excellence," each accompanied by a number of "quality indicators" useful for assessing the extent to which a particular standard is being met. Appendixes provide a checklist for assessing the extent to which a particular school meets these standards, and a guide for developing a school improvement plan. (MLF)

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STANDARDS FOR

KINDERGARTEN THROUGH EIGHTH GRADE

REVISED EDITION

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

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STANDARDS FOR

Quality Elementary & Middle Schools

KINDERGARTEN THROUGH EIGHTH GRADE

REVISED EDITION

8-20-90

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Price: Members—$10.95 Nonmembers—$14.95

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 90-61793

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Revised 1990 by the National Association of Elementary School Principals

Executive Director: Samuel G. Sava
Production: Ellen Matthews, Merrie Hahn
Typography: Scott Photographics, Inc.
Printing: Ken Wirsing, VMW Printing, Inc.

Funds for the publication of this Standards document were generously contributed by Lifetouch, Inc., of Minneapolis, formerly National School Studios, Richard P. Erickson, Chief Executive Officer.

NAESP
National Association of Elementary School Principals
1615 Duke Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Printed in the United States of America

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FOREWORD

This document sets forth the position of the National Association of Elementary School Principals regarding the essential characteristics of high quality elementary and middle schools. It combines the findings of current research on effective schooling with the practical, on-site experience of working K-8 principals.

As when we first issued *Standards for Quality Elementary Schools* in 1984, NAESP's objective in publishing this revised version is to provide guidelines for constructive change in education at the kindergarten-though-eighth-grade levels. We see these guidelines as serving two important purposes:

- To give states, school districts, boards of education, parents, and citizens in general a means for determining the degree to which their schools possess the ingredients necessary for providing quality education.
- To help individual principals assess the quality of their schools, as part of a continuing effort to enhance educational opportunities for their students.

These *Standards* address process rather than product, and cannot therefore be used to compare the performance of one school with another. It may be assumed, however, that application of these *Standards* will result in improving student and teacher performance within the school. An assessment based on these guidelines should not be seen as a substitute for the formal self-study required for regional school accreditation. NAESP believes that evaluation and voluntary accreditation are essential to the establishment and maintenance of quality elementary and middle schools. We recommend the process to all principals and other school officials, both toward obtaining an impartial "outside" view of a school's effectiveness and toward achieving recognition of the school's efforts to provide the essential ingredients of quality education.

As the issuance of this revision indicates, NAESP sees our *Standards* as a living document—requiring, like the schools themselves, unending renewal and refinement. We warmly welcome suggestions for improvements and would be grateful for accounts of how the document has been put to use.

Gary D. Salyers
President

Samuel G. Sava
Executive Director

INTRODUCTION

Since the nation's earliest days, Americans have felt a deep concern for their schools, seeing them as fundamental to the strength and survival of our democratic form of government and to our nation's economic vigor.

In recent years, concern for our system of public education has been evidenced in a number of wide-ranging (and mostly critical) reports, followed by an even larger number of legislative actions by the states. The reports took the schools to task for such things as high dropout rates, ill-equipped teachers, and the numbers of youngsters leaving the classroom unprepared either to sustain themselves or to help sustain our society. The states responded by enacting an array of laws aimed at bringing about fundamental reforms.

Initially the foment for change tended to focus primarily on the high schools. Gradually it began to be recognized, however, that the classroom performance of high school students depends to a significant degree on whether they acquire a strong foundation for future learning and productivity during the period between kindergarten and the eighth grade. Today there is a general perception that a solid educational grounding at a quality elementary and mid-level school is the chief determinant of subsequent success not just in high school and college but indeed in life.

But what makes a quality elementary or middle school? How is it different from other schools? Is there a model that could be used to establish quality K-8 learning experience throughout the country? Are there certain standards that schools must meet if they are to provide quality education for their students?

With such questions in mind, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) in September 1983 launched a project aimed at identifying those factors that make the difference between a successful school and one that needs a change of direction. With the co-sponsorship of the Johnson Foundation, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and the U.S. Department of Education, NAESP organized an exploratory conference at the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin. The discussions approached elementary and mid-level schooling from a variety of perspectives—curriculum, accreditation, and research among them—and from the varying viewpoints of teachers, principals, parents, civic leaders, and people active in their community.

Out of the Wingspread Conference came the establishment of two NAESP Standards Committees, both composed of selected elementary and middle school educators. The first was responsible for the original *Standards* document, in 1984, and the second for this revised version of that widely hailed publication. In their deliberations, both groups were guided by three basic premises:

- To merit a "quality" rating, the school's program must respond to the particular needs of the individual children who attend that school.
- Standards of quality should reflect both the findings of research on effective schools and the practical knowledge of functioning K-8 principals and their staffs, capitalizing on the insights of professionals who work with children on a daily basis.
- Since quality schools do not exist in isolation from the rest of the community, ideas and opinions must also be solicited from "outside" groups that are interested in the success of the schools.

Out of the deliberations of the original 1983 Standards Committee and its 1989 successor—together with the observations of an array of prominent

educators who provided comments and reactions—have come some basic conclusions about elementary and mid-level education in the United States:

Quality elementary and middle schools are not cast in a mold. They may be very different from one another in organization and procedures and in many other ways, reflecting the diversity and individualism that have long been part of our national ethos. We believe that a quality school comes about primarily through a commitment on the part of all persons and groups affected by that school. Quality schools, we would further note, are never satisfied that all is well. They seek continually to improve, to find better ways of meeting the changing needs of their students and the community.

Accompanying the differences among quality schools are many commonalities —a set of basic characteristics that no quality school is without. It is these characteristics that form the core of *Standards for Quality Elementary and Middle Schools: Kindergarten through Eighth Grade*. NAESP recommends them to every school district and every elementary and middle school in the nation.

We have grouped our standards into seven major categories: Organization, Leadership, Curriculum, Instruction, Training and Development, School Climate, and Evaluation and Assessment.

Contained within these seven categories are 21 "standards of excellence." Each standard is accompanied by a number of "quality indicators." These are intended to provide an indication of the current status of a particular standard and to cite some of the characteristics that might advisedly be considered in a campaign to improve the quality of a particular school's program.

Appendix A provides a checklist that principals, teachers, parents, and others can use to assess the extent to which their school meets the standards for quality elementary and middle schools. Appendix B provides a guide that may be useful in developing a plan for the school's improvement.

NAESP does not assume that the standards set forth in these pages represent the last word. We would simply note that they reflect intense consideration, well informed thought, and expert analysis. They offer a basic instrument for persons or groups interested in working to strengthen our nation by improving the quality of our schools.

ORGANIZATION

The organization of a quality elementary or mid-level school arises from that school's educational philosophy and is designed to meet the specific needs of its students.

The organization of a quality school reflects not only the philosophy of the overall school system but, in particular, a written list of goals developed cooperatively by the school staff and parents.

The fundamental responsibility for establishing such an organization lies with the school's principal. In a quality school the principal effectively integrates and coordinates instruction, administration, and day-to-day operations toward fulfilling the written goals—doing so in a manner that is sensitive to the individual needs of students and members of the staff.

In a quality school, decisions about the school's mission, goals, priorities, and day-to-day operations are made cooperatively with those responsible for carrying them out. Management of the school is based *in* the school, thus creating an optimal environment for educational reform. Among other things this means that the principal has responsibility for determining the allocation of human resources within the school.

Dual principalships with the principal administering more than one school, or also serving as a teacher, are inherently incompatible with quality. A key factor in a quality school is the visible presence of a strong principal who is not only the school's chief executive officer but also its instructional leader. It is unrealistic to expect a principal to provide necessary human support and leadership when also assigned teaching responsibilities or called upon to administer more than one school. Preservation of quality also requires provision of additional administrative assistance when school enrollment exceeds the 400 mark.

The quality school's academic year calls for a minimum of 180 days, each entailing a minimum of five hours of instructional time—that is, time exclusive of such activities as checking attendance, recess, and lunch. Those five hours are dominated by appropriate learning activities and are carefully protected against interruptions.

To enable teachers to do their jobs skillfully, time is specifically allocated for preparation and for staff development. The school year includes at least ten days in excess of the days on which the teacher teaches, with these extra days providing time for planning, staff development, and conferences. During the school day, time is allocated to teachers for daily planning and for consultation, in addition to the time scheduled with students. A teacher's typical working day is eight hours.

The grouping patterns within the school allow for learning at individual levels of need. Students may move from group to group, depending on the educational purposes to be served; grouping patterns do not lock students in. The best placement is seen as one that challenges the students' learning capacities.

Promotion and retention policies are clearly defined, written down, disseminated, and followed. They take into account such factors as age, achievement, social adjustment, parental support, alternative programs, and teacher recommendations. Early identification and provision for prevention and remedial programs are planned, understood, and implemented.

While class size alone is not the determining factor of student progress, research shows that more learning takes place when classes are small, facilitating the use of varied teaching styles. While smaller class sizes involve financial implications, the practical experience of principals strongly

supports efforts to limit class sizes to no more than *15* students to one classroom teacher for the primary grades and particularly for at-risk youngsters.

The needs of students may vary from school to school. In quality schools, well-trained professional and classroom personnel are provided in sufficient numbers to assure that identified student and program needs will be met. At the same time, parent and community volunteers play an important role in the school's program. Their activities are planned, supervised, and coordinated.

While school-based decision making is ultimately the responsibility of the principal, in quality elementary and middle schools the opinions, feelings, and ideas of parents, teachers, and students also figure importantly in the process. Financial planning is conducted on both short-term and long-term bases. Local, state, and federal levels must share responsibilities, as appropriate, for assuring that financial resources are available to meet the needs of students.

In all of these matters the emphasis is on creating an organization that carries out a carefully thought-out philosophy of education and fulfills specific learning objectives. The driving concern is the progress of children.

Standard of Excellence:

There Is a Written Statement of the School's Beliefs and Goals.

Quality Indicators:

- A copy of the statement is disseminated annually.
- The statement has been developed cooperatively, with contributions from groups within the school community.
- The statement reflects staff consensus.
- Staff members can:
  1. articulate the school's beliefs and goals,
  2. state specific instructional and noninstructional activities directed toward meeting those beliefs and goals, and
  3. cite assessment procedures that monitor student performance.
- The statement is reviewed at least annually.
- The statement is consistent with the school district's philosophy.
- The stated goals are used in planning the school's educational objectives and activities.

Standard of Excellence:

Sufficient Numbers of Well-Qualified Personnel Are Provided to Fulfill the School's Goals.

Quality Indicators:

- Staff members are qualified by preparation and experience for the positions to which they are assigned.
- The principal is responsible for determining the allocation of human resources within the school.
- Classroom teachers are assigned to the school on a maximum 15:1 pupil/classroom teacher ratio for primary grades, with the total for the school not to exceed an average of 20:1.
- Actual pupil/classroom teacher ratios may vary from class to class, with younger children receiving priority for a lower ratio.
- Instructional specialists are assigned based on student needs and programs (i.e., art, music, physical education, reading, media specialists, and counselors).
- Other supporting professional staff are assigned based on student needs.
- Classified staff (i.e., secretarial, custodial, paraprofessional, cafeteria) are provided commensurate with the size of the school and the nature of its programs.
- When student enrollment reaches 400, or exceptional conditions warrant, additional administrative assistance is allocated to the principal.
- Parent and community volunteers play an active role in the school's program.

Standard of Excellence:

Placement and Grouping Practices Are Determined by Student Needs.

Quality Indicators:

Placement and Assignment

- The placement and assignment of students to classes and teachers reflect an assessment of each student's needs and each teacher's skills.
- The principal assigns students taking into consideration information from professional staff and parents.

Grouping Practices

- There is a written statement of grouping policies based on the school's organizational philosophy.
- Current research regarding grouping practices is used in developing these policies.
- Grouping practices are flexible and serve the varying and changing needs and abilities of students.

Promotion/Retention

- Promotion and retention policies are stated in writing, disseminated to all concerned, and followed.
- These policies take into account such factors as age, achievement, school adjustment, parental support, alternative programs, and teacher recommendations.
- The procedures for retention are clearly specified.
- Preventive or remedial programs are provided as soon as their need becomes evident.

Standard of Excellence:

Sufficient Time Is Allocated to Accomplish the School's Educational Objectives.

Quality Indicators:

- The school day provides time for meeting the school's stated objectives and requires at least five hours of instructional time exclusive of recess and the lunch period. (The time for less than full-day kindergarten is prorated.)
- The school year provides a minimum of 180 instructional days to meet stated objectives.
- The teacher's duty day is typically eight hours.
- The number of teacher-contract days allows at least ten days in excess of the pupil instructional days. These days are used for staff development, planning, and conferences.
- Principals are employed as full-time employees.
- Interruptions during academic learning time are kept to a minimum.
- Class time is used for appropriate learning tasks.

Standard of Excellence:

Each School Has a Full-Time, Well-Qualified Principal

Quality Indicators:

- A principal's assignment is restricted to one school.
- The principal is qualified by preparation and experience for this responsibility.
- The principal's experience includes at least five successful years of teaching at the elementary or middle school level.
- The principal employs effective management skills in exerting instructional leadership that increases student learning through teaching excellence.
- The principal is not assigned teaching responsibilities.

LEADERSHIP

The principal is the one individual who is directly involved in every aspect of the school's operation and is thus the primary figure in determining the school's quality and character.

Principals in quality elementary and middle schools exhibit strong leadership; they inspire those around them to become immersed in the school's mission and dedicated to its attainment. Through their attitudes and conduct, they demonstrate the values and beliefs that are at the core of the school's operations and expectations. Their responsibilities extend beyond the classroom into the community, particularly with regard to parents, civic leaders, the media other building administrators, and the school district's central administration.

Principals in quality K-8 schools convey high expectations for students, teachers, and other members of the staff; all feel challenged to excel and inspired to do so. The characteristics of these principals include enthusiasm, initiative, a good sense of humor, self-confidence, optimism, consideration for others, and above all a deep and abiding concern for what is best for the students.

The principal in a quality K-8 school places highest priority on instructional leadership, creatively organizing the human and material resources necessary to provide an outstanding school program and inspire in students a lasting interest in learning. The principal is active not only in developing the school's curriculum but in carrying it out, working closely with teachers in determining effective instructional strategies. On a day-to-day basis, the principal is a frequent classroom observer and regularly confers with teachers on ways to improve instruction. The principal has a thorough knowledge of research findings on effective instructional practices and guides teachers in applying them in the classroom.

The principal in a quality school actively promotes professional development for teachers and staff and encourages attendance at workshops and other development activities. Such principals work cooperatively with teachers and staff to plan and organize inservice activities focused on the school's mission. They are at the same time attentive to their own professional development, continually seeking to enhance their knowledge through graduate course work and through participation in workshops, seminars, and discussions. Characteristically, they are active in the leadership of their professional associations.

Principals in quality schools are good organizers, making maximum use of available resources. They see time as an irreplaceable commodity—to be allocated sparingly to noninstructional aspects of the school operations. Such principals are effective problem solvers and are able to make decisions based on the information at hand. They have established effective communications with all segments of the school system and with the community at large, explaining both the school's accomplishments and its needs. They are able to win both community and financial support of present school programs and for new ones needed to keep pace with changing circumstances.

Recognizing that leadership should be shared, principals of quality schools encourage leadership on the part of others—students, teachers, staff, and involved parents—in order to accomplish the school's mission. The focus of these principals is firmly fixed on assuring children an elementary or middle school experience of the highest quality.

Standard of Excellence:
The Principal's Values, Beliefs, and Personal Characteristics Inspire People to Accomplish the School's Mission.

Quality Indicators:

- The principal demonstrates ethical behavior by consistently taking actions based upon clearly defined personal values and beliefs about what is best for children.
- The principal persuasively articulates his or her personal values and beliefs.
- The principal demonstrates
  1. vision
  2. a sense of humor
  3. self-confidence
  4. enthusiasm
  5. optimism
  6. initiative
  7. respect and consideration for others
  8. recognition and appreciation of the accomplishments of others
  9. a high energy quotient
  10. innovativeness
  11. intellectual curiosity and reflective thinking
  12. high expectations for quality performance.

Standard of Excellence:
The Principal Demonstrates Skills that Enable the School to Reach Its Goals.

Quality Indicators:

- The principal uses test data to diagnose student achievement and develop improved learner outcomes.
- The principal is thoroughly conversant with the curriculum and helps teachers implement it effectively.
- The principal knows and facilitates effective instructional practices.
- The principal observes classrooms on a regular basis.
- The principal confers promptly with teachers following observations, reinforcing effective practices and remediating ineffective ones.
- The principal employs techniques to promote efficient
  1. deployment of students, staff, and volunteers
  2. use of materials and equipment
  3. operation of plant and facilities
  4. scheduling of time.
- The principal uses a variety of techniques to identify and resolve problems.
- The principal applies valid research findings to school practices.
- The principal makes decisions based on relevant information and existing conditions.
- The principal is able to communicate effectively with all segments of the school and the community, and welcomes communications from those groups.
- The principal encourages leadership by students, teachers, and community members.
- The principal demonstrates knowledge of the nature of the children served by the school.

Solid achievement on the part of students comes about because of the joint efforts of many people—not just a few.

To assure that professional staff work productively and harmoniously, and in concert with the school's overall goals and expectations, there must be a well-defined curriculum that is followed by the staff in a coordinated fashion. Therein lies much of the difference between an outstanding school and a mediocre one.

The curriculum represents what the staff and the community want students to learn, what skills they are to master, and what values, attitudes, and habits they are to acquire. In a quality school, the curriculum will have been written down and formally adopted—incorporated in a set of documents that describe what teachers are expected to teach and what students are expected to learn. Considerable effort will have been devoted to building the curriculum around specific, measurable learning objectives that have been set forth for every subject at every grade level, along with expected student performance levels.

In quality schools the curriculum has been determined in a professional, cooperative manner by the staff, the district administration, and the district's governing board—following consultation with parents and other members of the community. All members of the staff know and understand the curriculum and are aware of the responsibilities it imposes on them. Indeed, they have helped to define those responsibilities. The manner in which teachers implement the curriculum is monitored regularly to assure, among other things, that they use the adopted curriculum guides and courses of study in developing their instructional plans—such plans being reexamined on a monthly, weekly, or even daily basis.

Student progress is measured regularly by tests and other forms of assessment. Where indicated, the results lead to modifications in the curriculum, in teaching techniques, and in strategies. The selection of instructional materials, textbooks, computer software, and other teaching aids is matched to the learning objectives specified in the curriculum.

The principal provides strong leadership in planning and organizing the curriculum; in securing and allocating appropriate resources of time, money, and materials to support it; and in regularly evaluating established goals. The principal ensures that the curriculum responds to the needs and abilities of the children involved, and that it provides an environment of excellence in which all children are encouraged to develop to their maximum potential. The curriculum is exciting and motivating—challenging students to reach out to new horizons.

In general, the curriculum in a quality school benefits the students in the following ways:

- They develop a strong foundation in the fundamentals of reading, writing, and mathematics; and they acquire basic knowledge and understanding in science, social studies, fine arts, health, and physical education.
- They become competent verbal and nonverbal communicators—learning to express themselves well in speaking, reading, and writing; to be attentive listeners; and to be at home with information technology.
- They work in an environment of excellence marked by high expectations and persistent striving toward mastery levels of achievement.
- They become self-motivated, learn to take advantage of opportunities for personal development, and emerge with a lasting zest for learning.

- They respect and demonstrate appreciation for their peers, their teachers, the staff, and the educational process itself; they practice tolerance, flexibility, empathy, and equality.
- They develop positive self-concepts, recognize and value their own uniqueness, and accept both their capabilities and their limitations.

Standard of Excellence:
There Is an Approved Curriculum that Defines What Teachers Are to Teach and What Children Are to Learn.

Quality Indicators:

- The curriculum reflects and supports the school's mission.
- A defined, written curriculum is used in planning the instructional program.
- The curriculum was developed cooperatively by the principal and the school staff, in consultation with parents.
- The curriculum identifies all areas of learning that are taught in the school.
- The established learning objectives are appropriate for the growth level of the individual child.
- All teachers work together for a continuum of learning.

Standard of Excellence:
The Curriculum Includes Experiences that Provide Children with Basic Skills Necessary to Function Effectively in a Global Society.

Quality Indicators:

- All curriculum areas are taught in an interdisciplinary manner.
- Communication skills include the ability to read, write, speak, spell, and listen.
- Mathematics instruction emphasizes computation, application, and problem-solving skills.
- Science instruction includes an inquiry approach to the study of the natural and physical world and the application of science and technology to society.
- Social studies instruction includes study of the interrelationships of peoples and cultures to the historic, geographic, and economic factors in the environment.
- Fine arts instruction includes visual arts, music, dance, and drama.
- Health and physical education instruction—emphasizing physical fitness and motor development skills—provides opportunities to develop lifelong habits of healthy living.
- Decision-making techniques are taught through problem solving and higher level thinking skills.
- Children are provided opportunities to assume responsibility for their own education and are guided to develop strong study skills, to use time efficiently, and to complete tasks.
- All aspects of the curriculum make use of a comprehensive multimedia center and information technology.

Standard of Excellence:
The Curriculum Includes Experiences that Enable Children to Grow in Knowledge, Understanding, and Appreciation of Themselves and Others.

Quality Indicators:

- Children have respect and appreciation for other students, teachers, and staff; for property; and for the educational process.
- Children learn appropriate conflict resolution skills.
- Children have healthy, positive self-concepts that enable them to appreciate success—academically, personally, and socially.
- Children recognize and value their own uniqueness and accept both their capabilities and their limitations.
- Children appreciate and respect differences in culture, race, and gender.

Standard of Excellence:
There is a Plan for Assessing, Supervising, and Monitoring the Implementation of the Curriculum.

Quality Indicators:

- Teachers demonstrate thorough understanding of the written curriculum.
- Appropriate instructional materials are provided and used to reinforce the objectives of the curriculum.
- Teachers use instructional techniques and strategies that are relevant to the curricular objectives and to research-based principles of learning.
- Teachers use formal and informal evaluation techniques and instruments to measure the curriculum's success.
- The instructional program is monitored to assure use of the written curriculum.

Standard of Excellence:
The Curriculum Is Supported by Adequate Financial and Material Resources.

Quality Indicators:

- Budget allocations are sufficient to meet the needs generated by the curriculum.
- The principal is responsible for the allocation of financial and material resources within the school.
- Appropriate and relevant materials are available for each student.
- The school makes use of appropriate resources from other educational institutions and from parents, business, industry, and service clubs.
- Equipment, supplies, and services needed to support the curriculum are readily available.
- The school principal, with staff involvement, determines the expenditure of funds available to accomplish the school's mission.

In quality schools, the principal guides the instructional program toward the achievement of clearly defined goals and objectives.

The instructional program's goals and objectives:

- Provide a framework for student achievement
- Help the professional staff plan and provide instruction that reflects the school's mission
- Ensure that students learn to derive joy and satisfaction from learning.

The professional staff plans with students and parents the instructional objectives for each student. Progress toward the achievement of these objectives is reported regularly to the students and their parents by both informal and formal methods. Students are expected to achieve their potential; they are held accountable for completing their assignments; they recognize that they have a responsibility for their own progress in school.

The program of instruction is consistent with the goals identified by the principal and the professional staff as basic to achievement of the school's mission, and it is expressed in a cooperatively established curriculum.

There is a strong emphasis on academics, as indicated by a high percentage of time spent on learning and a minimum of time lost during the school day for noninstructional activities. Teachers are able to carry on the business of the classroom free from outside interruptions and distractions.

The principal, teachers, and staff believe that every student can learn: each student is expected to be successful. As part of that expectation, the professional staff plans and implements instructional strategies that appropriately match curriculum outcomes with individual student needs.

All instruction is based on specific objectives geared to levels of difficulty and complexity appropriate for the particular pupils involved. Each student's learning needs are diagnosed through valid assessment techniques. These assessments form the basis for instruction that takes into account individual learning styles and rates of learning.

All teachers employ instructional methods demonstrated by research to be effective. At the beginning of each lesson the teacher explains how the new facts, ideas, and concepts relate to what has been learned previously, and how the new learning will be useful. Adequate time is spent presenting, demonstrating, and explaining.

The students are routinely shown examples of what they are expected to produce, and they are told the criteria by which their performance will be rated. Under the guidance of the teacher, students are given ample opportunity to put what they are learning into practice. Any required corrections are made immediately.

Homework is assigned for the specific purpose of having students apply the skills and concepts that have been taught during the school day, thereby reinforcing progress. Students have a thorough understanding of the content of their homework assignments and what they are expected to produce. Completed homework assignments are corrected, reviewed for student learning, and returned to the students promptly.

Teachers actively monitor their students' progress, and adjust their teaching accordingly. Effective use is made of the principles of motivation and reinforcement. Teachers approach their work with enthusiasm and creativity, and employ a variety of grouping patterns ranging from the entire class to one-to-one instruction. Teachers use direct instruction as the primary approach to teaching basic skills, as contrasted with program or student-directed activities.

The principal in a quality school understands child development, is well versed in effective instructional practices, and is an able guide for the teachers in applying these practices. The principal regularly conducts classroom observations, helps teachers identify the differences between effective and ineffective approaches, and explores possible alternatives for instructional improvement. As the school's instructional leader, the principal helps the teachers make every classroom a stimulating learning environment where teachers truly teach and learners truly learn.

Standard of Excellence:

The Professional Staff Plans and Provides Effective Instruction to Accomplish the School's Mission.

Quality Indicators:

- The principal guides the school's instructional program.
- The professional staff believes all students can learn and expects them to succeed.
- The instructional goals, objectives, and practices are appropriate to the developmental level of the child.
- Teachers use appropriate instructional strategies relevant to the objectives of the curriculum.
- Teachers allow sufficient time to present, demonstrate, and explain new content and skills.
- Teachers use a variety of classroom management skills to create an orderly and comfortable classroom environment that is conducive to learning.
- Teachers allow adequate opportunity to practice and master new skills.
- Teachers actively monitor student performance, give immediate response, and adjust instruction accordingly.
- The professional staff identifies students with special needs and provides appropriate instructional support.
- The professional staff uses a variety of instructional grouping patterns, ranging from whole class to one-to-one instruction.
- The professional staff continually diagnoses academic needs and prescribes educational activities that are appropriate for individual students, and take into account learning styles and rates of learning.
- The professional staff communicates regularly with parents regarding students' progress.

Standard of Excellence:
Students Are Taught How to Learn and to Value Learning.

Quality Indicators:

- Students believe they can learn.
- Students understand that they share the responsibility for successful learning.
- Students are held accountable for doing quality work.
- Students give evidence of being able to apply what they have learned.

Standard of Excellence:
The Instructional Program Assures the Attainment of Desired Student Outcomes.

Quality Indicators:

- The instructional program carries out the goals of the school district and of the individual school.
- Written, measurable educational objectives have been established and are consistent with the school's goals.
- Learning tasks are analyzed. Materials and activities used are linked to the objectives and goals of the curriculum.
- There is a heavy stress on academic learning. Minimal time is lost to such routines as taking attendance, distributing supplies, and changing from one activity to another.
- Appropriate homework related to the school curriculum is assigned, corrected, reviewed for student learning, and returned promptly.
- Students are taught critical and higher level thinking skills.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Education can be thought of as human resource development—helping people to develop to their full potential.

In quality elementary and mid-level schools, human resource development is a priority not only in connection with students but toward enhancing the talents of the people responsible for educating them. Development consists of two components:

- Staff development represents those opportunities provided by the school district
- Professional development represents those opportunities which individuals pursue to advance personal growth.

As a basic part of their operations, quality schools provide staff development programs designed to help each member of the staff refine and update the knowledge and skills each brings to the classroom or to other supportive services within the school. Staff development receives high priority, not just in theory but in practice.

Statistical trends show that the majority of teachers and principals who will be responsible for K-8 education through the turn of this century are already at work in our schools. It is therefore essential that schools maintain and increase the effectiveness of the certificated staff (and other employees) through well-designed programs of staff development. Such programs focus on emerging as well as established knowledge, and address needs specifically identified by the persons who will participate in them.

Recent research has consistently found that quality schools are led by principals who provide effective on-site management toward establishing and maintaining programs of excellence. The principal emerges as a strong instructional leader by building consensus concerning the school's mission, fostering the development of high expectations for student achievement and staff effectiveness, and stimulating superior work by staff and superior attainment by students. Principals cannot sustain effective leadership, however, without the provision of opportunities to grow professionally—to acquire increased knowledge and to hone the skills demanded by their jobs.

The most effective staff development programs are locally designed and specifically created to match the needs of participants with the mission of the school. Leaders of quality schools also recognize that staff development is a key to sustained growth. Such staff development enables teachers and principals to observe and coach one another in skills that will contribute to improved job performance. Undertaking such programs requires that the principal and staff carefully assess their needs and then obtain opportunities and experiences which must be evaluated on the effects of desirable changes observed in the classroom and in other areas of the school's program.

In addition to participating in locally specific staff development programs, teachers and principals in quality K-8 schools are expected to seek out and pursue more general professional development opportunities. Teachers and principals are in particular encouraged to be active members and participants in professional organizations. Such involvement assures that the individual remains abreast of current thinking in the field, and the sharing of such information helps promote interest in professional development among other staff members.

The National Association of Elementary School Principals recognizes the need for strengthening current undergraduate and graduate preparation programs for teachers and administrators to ensure that persons entering the profession are provided with high quality training. NAESP encourages the careful study and use of these *Standards for Quality Elementary and Middle Schools* by persons responsible for developing course content and preparatory experiences for teachers and principals.

Standard of Excellence:

The School Has an Effective Staff Development Program for All Members of the Staff.

Quality Indicators:

Staff

- The design of the program is based on needs assessments and includes recommendations by the participants.
- The staff is routinely provided information regarding valid research and current practice.
- Staff development programs incorporate knowledge of adult learning patterns and are relevant to actual responsibilities.
- Time, personnel, and financial resources for staff development are provided within and outside the school day.
- Staff development programs include preparing teachers to observe and coach one another on skills related to the goals of the school.
- Staff development programs are evaluated for effectiveness.
- The effectiveness of staff development programs is validated through improved teaching practices.

Principals

- Administrative staff development opportunities are provided and are based on identified job responsibilities.
- Time and financial resources are provided for attendance at workshops, seminars, and conferences; for subscriptions to professional journals; and for professional interaction with other principals and administrators.
- Administrative staff development programs include such school-based proficiencies as the following:
  1. leadership behavior
  2. communication skills
  3. group processes
  4. curriculum development and implementation
  5. instructional processes
  6. assessing performance
  7. evaluation of programs and personnel
  8. school organization
  9. fiscal management
  10. political influences and decision making.
- Administrative staff development programs are evaluated for effectiveness.
- The effectiveness of administrative staff development programs is validated through improved administrative performance.

Standard of Excellence:

The Professional Staff Recognizes the Need for Continuing, Voluntary Professional Development Activities that Promote Personal Growth.

Quality Indicators:

Staff

- Teachers annually pursue professional development opportunities that enhance teaching performance.
- Teachers voluntarily devote time beyond the school day and contract year to personal professional development activities.
- Professional development incentives are provided for contributions to the development of professional colleagues.
- Professional development readings and activities are shared with colleagues.
- Teachers are members of professional associations appropriate to their assignment.

Principal

- The principal annually pursues professional development opportunities that enhance educational leadership.
- The principal voluntarily devotes time beyond the school day or contract year to professional development activities.
- Professional development incentives are provided for contributions to the development of professional colleagues.
- The principal is a member of local, state, and national professional associations appropriate to the work of school administrators.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

School climate may be defined as the combination of those qualities of a school that affect the attitudes, behavior, and achievement of the people involved in its operation—students, staff, parents, and members of the community.

Though not easily defined, a favorable school climate is easily recognized, and its creation and preservation represent one of the principal's highest leadership priorities. In quality schools, staff and students care for, respect, and trust one another. Morale is high, and social and academic growth are continuous.

A caring atmosphere permeates the school. The principal is truly interested in every student, staff member, and parent—and sets an example by displaying that interest. Feelings, concerns, and conflicts receive fair and consistent attention. Those involved with the school value able performance by others. Administrators, teachers and other members of the staff, students, and parents are all encouraged to share in celebrating the successful accomplishment of each other's work.

Genuine respect for individual differences exists among staff, students, parents, and administrators. Staff members recognize the importance of respect and demonstrate consistent effort to learn and address students by name. Staff and students alike are encouraged to develop a sense of self-worth, and equal learning opportunities are provided for all students.

The level of trust is high. The principal respects the teachers' judgment, encourages them to participate in school-based decisions that directly affect them, and provides them with appropriate professional autonomy within the classroom. Similarly, students share in classroom and school decisions in which they have a stake, and they accept responsibility for personal learning. Parents are confident that the school staff meets the learning needs of their children. Reciprocal trust is evident among all members of the school community.

In quality schools the morale is high. Students are enthusiastic about learning, teachers are enthusiastic about teaching, and parents are eager to become involved in school activities. The achievements and contributions of all persons within the school are consistently and appropriately acknowledged and celebrated.

Quality schools place appropriate emphasis on the social development of students. A written code of student behavior has been developed through the collaborative efforts of parents, teachers, the principal, and the students themselves. This code is administered fairly and consistently by the principal and staff members. The children know that the principal and staff stand ready to provide advice and counsel, or simply listen when they need to talk. Responsible student citizenship is emphasized and practiced in all school activities.

The students' academic development is of primary concern to the principal and staff members in a quality school. Learning is constantly celebrated, particularly through attractively displayed student work found throughout the building. Attendance is high and vandalism is negligible. Student mastery is supported. Failures are few.

The presence of these qualities is characterized by an avid school spirit, a sense of cohesiveness that exists throughout the school. The actions and words of both staff and students indicate that they would rather be at this school than at any other.

Standard of Excellence:

The School's Environment Encourages the Capabilities and Emphasizes the Worth of Individuals.

Quality Indicators:

Caring

- Staff members, students, and parents demonstrate a genuine interest in the welfare of one another.
- A written plan exists to promote school/community interaction.
- Cooperatively planned school/community activities take place regularly.
- Parents feel that they are welcome in the school.
- Parents work cooperatively with teachers and students to develop plans for student progress.
- Parent education programs that meet the needs of the school community are provided.
- Parents demonstrate interest in and concern for their children's school.

Respect

- Faculty and staff are committed to the school's mission.
- Students and school personnel show mutual respect for one another.
- The teachers and the principal know and address students by name.
- Conflict resolution procedures are applied fairly and consistently.
- The physical plant and school grounds are:
  1. clean
  2. aesthetically pleasing
  3. safe
  4. well-maintained.

Trust

- Students accept responsibility for personal learning.
- Students share in appropriate decision making within the classroom and school.
- Staff members participate in making those school-based decisions that directly affect them.
- Teachers are given appropriate autonomy for professional decisions.
- Parents express confidence in the school staff's ability to meet the learning needs of children.

Morale

- Morale is high among students, staff, and the school community.
- Students and school personnel support one another and work together harmoniously.
- Pride in the school is evident among students, staff, and community.
- Staff members acknowledge and celebrate the special contributions and achievements of others within the school.

Social Development

- School personnel model appropriate behavior and reward desirable behavior of students.
- Citizenship responsibility is emphasized through student participation in student council or similar leadership development activities.
- There is a written code of conduct.
- The code is developed cooperatively by students, staff, and parents.
- The code is followed consistently.
- Students, staff, and parents accept and share responsibility for discipline.
- Discipline is used as a tool for learning rather than punishment.

Academic Development

- The accomplishments of students and school personnel are appropriately recognized and celebrated.
- Student work is attractively displayed.
- Attendance by students and staff is high.
- Students and staff are aware that outstanding performance is expected of them.
- Students and staff expect to be successful.
- School personnel believe that all children can learn.

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

An effective school gathers and uses information to help determine whether to continue particular programs and practices, and as a guide to modifications that will improve them.

Evaluation serves as a systematic process of determining whether goals are being achieved and expectations met. It involves setting standards, identifying levels of performance both above and below these standards, selecting courses of action to deal with below-standard performance, continual monitoring of progress, and assessing accomplishments. Evaluation is used by effective schools to determine whether they are making the kind of contribution to their students and the community for which they were established.

In appraising students, quality schools use a variety of instruments and approaches—among them, teacher-designed tests to check student mastery of particular learning objectives; competency tests to determine a fundamental level of skill and knowledge deemed necessary before students progress to a higher grade; and commercially prepared (sometimes called "standardized") tests to compare the progress of students in a particular school with that of students in a larger group, such as within the state or in the nation at large.The best schools select testing programs that reflect local educational objectives. That is, they test what students have been taught, thus obtaining the kinds of data best adapted to planning and improving programs. Such schools regularly report test results, and in terms the public can readily grasp.

Quality schools monitor student achievement in such a way as to make it possible to report each student's progress in relation to a particular grade level, to the established expectations for the course involved, or to a student's individual educational plan.

Assessments of student progress are important not only for what they reveal about the progress of individual students but also for what they say about the overall school program. Similar clues are provided by evaluation of the school staff. In regard to teachers, the evaluation plans of quality schools rely heavily on observations of teachers in a teaching situation. Although research findings are somewhat equivocal concerning the characteristics of effective teachers, those in quality K-8 schools are distinguished by clarity of presentation and thorough knowledge of subject matter.

In quality elementary schools, evaluations of students, teachers, and principals are focused on improvement; they are seen as essential elements in a process for determining whether objectives have been met. They do not compare one person to another, and they do not produce stigmas. Inherent in the quality school's evaluation process are procedures for remediation and modification. Appropriate assistance is immediately available for any student, teacher, or principal who needs it. Performance significantly above the required is formally recognized.

Evaluation and assessment in quality elementary schools are handled with care and sensitivity. They are used to facilitate progress, and all concerned understand not only the purposes of the evaluation but the particular processes and instruments involved. Evaluation in such a school is as commonplace and acceptable as the program of instruction.

Standard of Excellence:
Evaluation Data Are Used to Improve the School's Programs.

Quality Indicators:

- Validated evaluation techniques and instruments are used routinely.
- The evaluation process includes self-examination as well as assessment by external sources.
- Evaluations relate to the attainment of particular goals.
- A variety of assessments are used.
- The results of teacher-made and curriculum-specific tests are used in making instructional decisions.
- Standardized tests are used to provide comparative data.
- Results of evaluations are made available to all interested parties.

Standard of Excellence:
Student Assessment and Evaluation Are Based on Mastery of Defined Objectives of the Curriculum.

Quality Indicators:

- Mastery assessments and the curriculum are matched.
- Common criteria for curriculum mastery and student evaluation are written, distributed, and followed.
- Assessment results are used to develop appropriate educational plans for each student.
- The results of assessment and evaluation are reported to both students and parents.
- A cumulative academic record is maintained for each student.
- Positive recognition is given to students as they master curriculum objectives.

Standard of Excellence:
A Fair and Systematic Procedure Is Followed for the Evaluation of All Staff Members.

Quality Indicators:

Staff

- Each staff member knows the evaluation criteria and procedure.
- Evaluation is based on performance, firsthand data, amount of assistance given, and what students have learned.
- The evaluation process is cooperative and positive.
- The system of evaluation recognizes accountability and distinguishes between competent and incompetent performance.
- A remediation process exists that offers resources for improvement of performance.
- There are written procedures that provide due process for the removal of incompetent staff members.
- Performance significantly above the required is formally recognized.

Principals

- Each principal knows the evaluation criteria and procedure.
- Evaluation is based on the degree to which the school grows in accomplishing its mission.
- Evaluation is based on firsthand data and valid evidence.
- The system of evaluation recognizes accountability and distinguishes between competent and incompetent performance.
- A remediation process exists that offers resources for improvement of performance.
- There are written procedures that provide due process for *removal of* incompetent principals.
- Performance significantly above the required is formally recognized.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

NAESP acknowledges with deep appreciation the work of the outstanding committee chosen to undertake this revision of the **Standards** document.

June T. Spooner, Chair
Dean Road Elementary School
(Auburn City Schools)
Auburn, Alabama

James L. Doud
Director, Iowa Principals Academy
University of Northern Iowa
Cedar Falls, Iowa

Mildred Marshall
Holiday Hill Elementary School
(Jacksonville City Schools)
Jacksonville, Florida

William H. Peterson
Heritage Elementary School
(Elgin School District)
Streamwood, Illinois

Irwin Shanken
Oliver Heckman School
(Neshaminy School District)
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

Merrie Hahn, Staff Liaison
Program/Information Services Coordinator
NAESP

Gary D. Salyers, Ex officio
Linwood Elementary School
(North Clackamas School District 12)
Milwaukie, Oregon

Samuel G. Sava, Ex officio
Executive Director
NAESP

Also, we would like to thank once again the fine committee that produced the original **Standards**. They included June Spooner, James Doud, and Irwin Shanken.

William A. Burley
John Pettibone Elementary School
(New Milford Public Schools)
New Milford, Connecticut

Colleen S. Colton
Discovery Elementary School
(Uintah School District)
Vernal, Utah

Dorothy A. Friend
Cassidy Elementary School
(Fayette County Public Schools)
Lexington, Kentucky

Doug Gowler
Sagebrush Elementary School
(Cherry Creek School District)
Aurora, Colorado

Ruben L. Ingram
Elementary/Middle Schools
(Fountain Valley School District)
Fountain Valley, California

Samuel E. LoPresto
Sycamore Elementary School
(Holt Public Schools)
Holt, Michigan

Jean M. Williams
Irving Elementary School
(Wichita Public Schools)
Wichita, Kansas

Inez G. Wood
E.A. Clark Elementary School
(District of Columbia Public Schools)
Washington, D.C.

APPENDIX A

Checklist for Quality Indicators

The checklist on the following pages is intended to guide the review of each of the quality indicators included in *Standards for Quality Elementary and Middle Schools*.

Respondents are asked to identify the extent to which each of the quality indicators is evident within the school, according to the following scale: Always Evident, Usually Evident, Seldom Evident, or Not Evident. Specific definitions for these terms should be determined through consensus among those persons using the checklist.

In most cases, persons using this checklist will find ready evidence as they move through the school and classrooms. However, some quality indicators may require visits with the school principal, teachers, staff, students, and/or parents to gain the required information, understanding, or evidence to make an accurate response.

In completing the checklist it is important that the "comments or suggestions" section of each page be used to record specific information or perceptions that influenced the manner in which the quality indicators were checked. Upon completion of the checklist for each standard, this space should also be used to identify and prioritize specific actions that might be taken relative to areas in which improvement is needed. This data will be beneficial and will save time during later steps in the planning process.

Thoughtful observers should be able to identify each of the 21 "standards of excellence" within every quality school. This is not necessarily the case, however, in regard to the "quality indicators." These help provide an indication of the current status of a particular standard and identify some of the characteristics that might be considered in the development of a plan to improve the quality of a particular school's program.

Completion of this checklist provides the data needed to begin the improvement planning process suggested in Appendix B.

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THERE IS A WRITTEN STATEMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S BELIEFS AND GOALS.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
A copy of the statement is disseminated annually.				
The statement has been developed cooperatively, with contributions from groups within the school community.				
The statement reflects staff consensus.				
Staff members are able to: 1. articulate the school's beliefs and goals 2. state specific instructional and noninstructional activities directed toward meeting those beliefs and goals, and 3. cite assessment procedures that monitor student performance.				
The statement is reviewed at least annually.				
The statement is consistent with the school district's philosophy.				
The stated goals are used in planning the school's educational objectives and activities.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

SUFFICIENT NUMBERS OF WELL-QUALIFIED PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDED TO FULFILL THE SCHOOL'S GOALS.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Staff members are qualified by preparation and experience for the positions to which they are assigned.				
The principal is responsible for determining the allocation of human resources within the school.				
Classroom teachers are assigned to the school on a maximum 15:1 pupil/classroom teacher ratio for primary grades, with the total for the school not to exceed an average of 20:1.				
Actual pupil/classroom teacher ratios may vary from class to class, with younger children receiving priority for a lower ratio.				
Instructional specialists are assigned based on student needs and programs (i.e., art, music, physical education, reading, media specialists, and counselors).				
Other supporting professional staff are assigned based on student needs.				
Classified staff (i.e., secretarial, custodial, paraprofessional, cafeteria) are provided commensurate with the size of the school and the nature of its programs.				
When student enrollment reaches 400, or exceptional conditions warrant, additional administrative assistance is allocated to the principal.				
Parent and community volunteers play an active role in the school's program.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

PLACEMENT AND GROUPING PRACTICES ARE DETERMINED BY STUDENT NEEDS.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Placement and Assignment				
The placement and assignment of students to classes and teachers reflect an assessment of each student's needs and each teacher's skills.				
The principal assigns students taking into consideration information from professional staff and parents.				
Grouping Practices				
There is a written statement of grouping policies based on the school's organizational philosophy.				
Current research regarding grouping practices is used in developing these policies.				
Grouping practices are flexible and serve the varying and changing needs and abilities of students.				
Promotion/Retention				
Promotion and retention policies are stated in writing, disseminated to all concerned, and followed.				
These policies take into account such factors as age, achievement, school adjustment, parental support, alternative programs, and teacher recommendations.				
The procedures for retention are clearly specified.				
Preventive or remedial programs are provided as soon as their need becomes evident.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

SUFFICIENT TIME IS ALLOCATED TO ACCOMPLISH THE SCHOOL'S EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
The school day provides time for meeting the school's stated objectives and requires at least five hours of instructional time exclusive of recess and the lunch period. (The time for less than full-day kindergarten is prorated.)				
The school year provides a minimum of 180 instructional days to meet stated objectives.				
The teacher's duty day is typically eight hours.				
The number of teacher-contract days allows at least ten days in excess of the pupil instructional days. These days are used for staff development, planning, and conferences.				
Principals are employed as full-time employees.				
Interruptions during academic learning time are kept to a minimum.				
Class time is used for appropriate learning tasks.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

EACH SCHOOL HAS A FULL-TIME, WELL-QUALIFIED PRINCIPAL.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
A principal's assignment is restricted to one school.				
The principal is qualified by preparation and experience for this responsibility.				
The principal's experience includes at least five successful years of teaching at the elementary or middle school level.				
The principal employs effective management skills in exerting instructional leadership that increases student learning through teaching excellence.				
The principal is not assigned teaching responsibilities.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE PRINCIPAL'S VALUES, BELIEFS, AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS INSPIRE PEOPLE TO ACCOMPLISH THE SCHOOL'S MISSION.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
The principal can persuasively articulate his or her personal values and beliefs.				
The principal demonstrates:				
1. vision				
2. a sense of humor				
3. self-confidence				
4. enthusiasm				
5. optimism				
6. initiative				
7. respect and consideration for others				
8. recognition and appreciation of the accomplishments of others				
9. a high energy quotient				
10. innovativeness				
11. intellectual curiosity and reflective thinking				
12. high expectations for quality performance.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE PRINCIPAL DEMONSTRATES SKILLS THAT ENABLE THE SCHOOL TO REACH ITS GOALS.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
The principal uses test data to diagnose student achievement and develop improved learner outcomes.				
The principal is thoroughly conversant with the curriculum and helps teachers implement it effectively.				
The principal knows and facilitates effective instructional practices.				
The principal observes classrooms on a regular basis.				
The principal confers promptly with teachers following observations, toward reinforcing effective practices and remediating ineffective ones.				
The principal employs techniques to promote efficient 1. deployment of students, staff, and volunteers 2. use of materials and equipment 3. operation of plant and facilities 4. scheduling of time.				
The principal uses a variety of techniques to identify and resolve problems.				
The principal applies valid research findings to school practices.				
The principal makes decisions based on relevant information and existing conditions.				
The principal is able to communicate effectively with all segments of the school and the community, and welcomes communications from those groups.				
The principal encourages leadership by students, teachers, and community members.				
The principal demonstrates knowledge of the nature of the children served by the school.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THERE IS AN APPROVED CURRICULUM THAT DEFINES WHAT TEACHERS ARE TO TEACH AND WHAT CHILDREN ARE TO LEARN.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
The curriculum reflects and supports the school's mission.				
A defined, written curriculum is used in planning the instructional program.				
The curriculum was developed cooperatively by the principal and the school staff, in consultation with parents.				
The curriculum identifies all areas of learning that are taught in the school. The established learning objectives are appropriate for the growth level of the individual child.				
All teachers work together for a continuum of learning.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE CURRICULUM INCLUDES EXPERIENCES THAT PROVIDE CHILDREN WITH BASIC SKILLS NECESSARY TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY IN A GLOBAL SOCIETY.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
All curriculum areas are taught in an interdisciplinary manner.				
Communication skills include the ability to read, write, speak, spell, and listen.				
Mathematics instruction emphasizes computation, application, and problem-solving skills.				
Science instruction includes an inquiry approach to the study of the natural and physical world and the application of science and technology to society.				
Social studies instruction includes study of the interrelationships of peoples and cultures to the historic, geographic, and economic factors in the environment.				
Fine arts instruction includes visual arts, music, dance, and drama.				
Health and physical education instruction—emphasizing physical fitness and motor development skills—provides opportunities to develop lifelong habits of healthy living.				
Decision-making techniques are taught through problem solving and higher level thinking skills.				
Children are provided opportunities to assume responsibility for their own education and are guided to develop strong study skills, to use time efficiently, and to complete tasks.				
All aspects of the curriculum make use of a comprehensive multimedia center and information technology.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE CURRICULUM INCLUDES EXPERIENCES THAT ENABLE CHILDREN TO GROW IN KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING, AND APPRECIATION OF THEMSELVES AND OTHERS.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Children have respect and appreciation for other students, teachers, and staff; for property; and for the educational process.				
Children learn appropriate conflict resolution skills.				
Children have healthy, positive self-concepts that enable them to appreciate success—academically, personally, and socially.				
Children recognize and value their own uniqueness and accept both their capabilities and their limitations.				
Children appreciate and respect differences in cultures, race, and gender.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THERE IS A PLAN FOR ASSESSING, SUPERVISING, AND MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CURRICULUM.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Teachers demonstrate thorough understanding of the written curriculum.				
Appropriate instructional materials are provided and used to reinforce the objectives of the curriculum.				
Teachers use instructional techniques and strategies that are relevant to the curricular objectives and to research-based principles of learning.				
Teachers use formal and informal evaluation techniques and instruments to measure the curriculum's success.				
The instructional program is monitored to assure use of the written curriculum.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE CURRICULUM IS SUPPORTED BY ADEQUATE FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL RESOURCES.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Budget allocations are sufficient to meet the needs generated by the curriculum.				
The principal is responsible for the allocation of financial and material resources within the school.				
Appropriate and relevant materials are available for each student.				
The school makes use of appropriate resources from other educational institutions and from parents, business, industry, and service clubs.				
Equipment, supplies, and services needed to support the curriculum are readily available.				
The school principal, with staff involvement, determines the expenditure of funds available to accomplish the school's mission.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE PROFESSIONAL STAFF PLANS AND PROVIDES EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION TO ACCOMPLISH THE SCHOOL'S MISSION.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
The principal guides the school's instructional program.				
The professional staff believes all students can learn and expects them to succeed.				
The instructional goals, objectives, and practices are appropriate to the developmental level of the child.				
Teachers use appropriate instructional strategies relevant to the objectives of the curriculum.				
Teachers allow sufficient time to present, demonstrate, and explain new content and skills.				
Teachers use a variety of classroom management skills to create an orderly and comfortable classroom environment that is conducive to learning.				
Teachers allow adequate opportunity to practice and master new skills.				
Teachers actively monitor student performance, give immediate response, and adjust instruction accordingly.				
The professional staff uses a variety of instructional grouping patterns, ranging from whole class to one-to-one instruction.				
The professional staff identifies students with special needs and provides appropriate instructional support.				
The professional staff continually diagnoses academic needs and prescribes educational activities that are appropriate for individual students, taking into account learning styles and rates of learning.				
The professional staff communicates regularly with parents regarding students' progress.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

STUDENTS ARE TAUGHT HOW TO LEARN AND TO VALUE LEARNING.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Students believe they can learn.				
Students understand that they share the responsibility for successful learning.				
Students are held accountable for doing quality work.				
Students give evidence of being able to apply what they have learned.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM ASSURES THE ATTAINMENT OF DESIRED STUDENT OUTCOMES.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
The instructional program carries out the goals of the school district and of the individual school.				
Written, measurable educational objectives have been established and are consistent with the school's goals.				
Learning tasks are analyzed. Materials and activities used are linked to the objectives and goals of the curriculum.				
There is a heavy stress on academic learning. Minimal time is lost to such routines as taking attendance, distributing supplies, and changing from one activity to another.				
Appropriate homework related to the school curriculum is assigned, corrected, reviewed for student learning, and returned promptly.				
Students are taught critical and higher level thinking skills.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE SCHOOL HAS AN EFFECTIVE STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE STAFF.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Staff				
The design of the program is based on needs assessments and includes recommendations by the participants.				
The staff is routinely provided information regarding valid research and current practice.				
Staff development programs incorporate knowledge of adult learning patterns and are relevant to actual responsibilities.				
Time, personnel, and financial resources for staff development are provided within and outside the school day.				
Staff development programs include preparing teachers to observe and coach one another on skills related to the goals of the school.				
Staff development programs are evaluated for effectiveness.				
The effectiveness of staff development programs is validated through improved teaching practices.				
Principals				
Administrative staff development opportunities are provided and are based on identified job responsibilities.				
Time and financial resources are provided for attendance at workshops, seminars, and conferences; for subscriptions to professional journals; and for professional interaction with other principals and administrators.				
Administrative staff development programs include training in such school-based proficiencies as the following:				
1. leadership behavior 2. communication skills 3. group processes 4. curriculum development and implementation 5. instructional processes 6. assessing performance 7. evaluation of programs and personnel 8. school organization 9. fiscal management 10. political influences and decision making.				
Administrative staff development programs are evaluated for effectiveness.				
The effectiveness of administrative staff development programs is validated through improved administrative performance.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE PROFESSIONAL STAFF RECOGNIZES THE NEED FOR CONTINUING, VOLUNTARY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE PERSONAL GROWTH.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Staff				
Teachers annually pursue professional development opportunities that enhance teaching performance.				
Teachers voluntarily devote time beyond the school day and contract year to personal professional development activities.				
Professional development incentives are provided for contributions to the development of professional colleagues.				
Professional development readings and activities are shared with colleagues.				
Teachers are members of professional associations appropriate to their assignment.				
Principals				
The principal annually pursues professional development opportunities that enhance educational leadership.				
The principal voluntarily devotes time beyond the school day or contract year to professional development activities.				
Professional development incentives are provided for contributions to the development of professional colleagues.				
The principal is a member of local, state, and national professional associations appropriate to the work of school administrators.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

THE SCHOOL'S ENVIRONMENT ENCOURAGES THE CAPABILITIES AND EMPHASIZES THE WORTH OF ALL INDIVIDUALS.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Caring				
Staff members, students, and parents demonstrate a genuine interest in the welfare of one another.				
A written plan exists to promote school/community interaction.				
Cooperatively planned school/community activities take place regularly.				
Parents feel that they are welcome in the school.				
Parents work cooperatively with teachers and students to develop plans for student progress.				
Parent education programs that meet the needs of the school community are provided.				
Parents demonstrate interest in and concern for their children's school.				
Respect				
Faculty and staff are committed to the school's mission.				
Students and school personnel show mutual respect for one another.				
The teachers and the principal know and address students by name.				
Conflict resolution procedures are applied fairly and consistently.				
The physical plant and school grounds are: 1. clean 2. aesthetically pleasing 3. safe 4. well-maintained.				
Trust				
Students accept responsibility for personal learning.				
Students share in appropriate decision making within the classroom and school.				
Staff members participate in making those school-based decisions that directly affect them.				

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Teachers are given appropriate autonomy for professional decisions.				
Parents express confidence in the school staff's ability to meet the learning needs of children.				
Morale				
Morale is high among students, staff, and the school community.				
Students and school personnel support one another and work together harmoniously.				
Pride in the school is evident among students, staff, and community.				
Staff members acknowledge and celebrate the special contributions and achievements of others within the school.				
Social Development				
School personnel model appropriate behavior and reward desirable behavior of students.				
Citizenship responsibility is emphasized through student participation in student council or similar leadership development activities.				
There is a written code of conduct.				
The code is developed cooperatively by students, staff, and parents.				
The code is followed consistently.				
Students, staff, and parents accept and share responsibility for discipline.				
Discipline is used as a tool for learning rather than punishment.				
Academic Development				
The accomplishments of students and school personnel are appropriately recognized and celebrated.				
Student work is attractively displayed.				
Attendance of students and staff is high.				
Students and staff are aware that outstanding performance is expected of them. Students and staff expect to be successful.				
School personnel believe that all children can learn.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

EVALUATION DATA ARE USED TO IMPROVE THE SCHOOL'S PROGRAMS.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Validated evaluation techniques and instruments are used routinely.				
The evaluation process includes self-examination as well as assessment by external sources.				
Evaluations relate to the attainment of particular goals.				
A variety of assessments are used.				
The results of teacher-made and curriculum-specific tests are used in making instructional decisions.				
Standardized tests are used to provide comparative data.				
Results of evaluations are made available to all interested parties.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION ARE BASED ON MASTERY OF DEFINED OBJECTIVES OF THE CURRICULUM.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Mastery assessments and the curriculum are matched.				
Common criteria for curriculum mastery and student evaluation are written, distributed, and followed.				
Assessment results are used to develop appropriate educational plans for each student.				
The results of assessment and evaluation are reported to both students and parents.				
A cumulative academic record is maintained for each student.				
Positive recognition is given to students as they master curriculum objectives.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

A FAIR AND SYSTEMATIC PROCEDURE IS FOLLOWED FOR THE EVALUATION OF ALL STAFF MEMBERS.

QUALITY INDICATORS	ALWAYS EVIDENT	USUALLY EVIDENT	SELDOM EVIDENT	NOT EVIDENT
Staff				
Each staff member knows the evaluation criteria and procedure.				
Evaluation is based on performance, firsthand data, amount of assistance given, and what students have learned.				
The evaluation process is cooperative and positive.				
The system of evaluation recognizes accountability and distinguishes between competent and incompetent performance.				
A remediation process exists that offers resources for improvement of performance.				
There are written procedures that provide due process for the removal of incompetent staff members.				
Performance significantly above the required is formally recognized.				
Principals				
Each principal knows the evaluation criteria and procedure.				
Evaluation is based on the degree to which the school grows in accomplishing its mission.				
Evaluation is based on firsthand data and valid evidence.				
The system of evaluation recognizes accountability and distinguishes between competent and incompetent performance.				
A remediation process exists that offers resources for improvement of performance.				
There are written procedures that provide due process for *removal of* incompetent principals.				
Performance significantly above the required is formally recognized.				

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS

APPENDIX B

Planning Guide for School Improvement

This planning guide helps identify those standards where efforts for improvement should be focused. The steps to be followed in the use of this appendix are:

1. Using the data from the Appendix A checklist, a judgment of the extent of improvement needed in each of the 21 standards should be made according to the following scale: Minimal, Some, or Extensive. Specific definitions for these terms should be determined through consensus among those persons using the checklist. A review of the checklist and "comments or suggestions" listed in Appendix A provide the basis for making this judgment.
2. When the extent of "improvement indicated" for a standard has been determined, identify through consensus three to five specific actions that might be taken to improve the school's performance in this standard area. List these actions, using statements that clearly define *measurable outcomes*, in the space provided for "Plan for Improvement."
3. When steps #1 and #2 have been completed for each of the 21 standards, it is time to prioritize the need for improvement in each standard area. Consider the extent of improvement indicated in step #1 and the plan for improvement identified in step #2 to make priority judgments for each standard area. It is important that you give highest priority to those areas that will move the school toward desirable outcomes, and that you take time to build commitment from those who will be directly involved in implementation of the improvement plan. In the appropriate box indicate the priority assigned to each standard, using 1 as the highest and 21 as the lowest.
4. The next step in the school improvement planning process is the identification of a target completion date for each of the specific plans that have been identified. This will facilitate monitoring and supervision of the improvement plan, and is vital to the establishment of accountability for school improvement. It is important that not more than three to five standard areas be initially targeted for work and that the number of specific plans for improvement be reasonable. (It is more sensible to set three or four substantive targets than six or eight of lesser importance.) Proper care in the establishment of a reasonable timeline for completion of the targeted activity is essential to sustaining faculty commitment to school improvement and to the ultimate success of the planning process.
5. The next step is to identify the person(s) responsible for seeing that the specific plan is implemented. It is essential that those who will be held accountable for implementation of the plan be clearly identified. Use the space provided on the planning form to list such person(s).
6. The principal and/or implementation team should then develop a master plan that should be distributed to all faculty or prominently displayed where everyone can be reminded of the school improvement plan which has been developed. This plan of action will guide the school staff in their efforts to improve the quality of the school.

Maximal gains will be achieved when the principal exercises frequent leadership and monitoring of the plan. Recognition of desired changes and celebration of the accomplishment of the school improvement outcomes will help sustain faculty morale and interest in continuous school improvement.

ORGANIZATION

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE	IMPROVEMENT INDICATED: MINIMAL	SOME	EXTENSIVE	PRIORITY ASSIGNED	COMPLETION DATE
There is a written statement of the school's beliefs and goals.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

Sufficient numbers of well-qualified personnel are provided to fulfill the school's goals.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

Placement and grouping practices are determined by student needs.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

Sufficient time is allocated to accomplish the school's educational objectives.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

Each school has a full-time, well-qualified principal.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE	IMPROVEMENT INDICATED: MINIMAL	SOME	EXTENSIVE	PRIORITY ASSIGNED	COMPLETION DATE
The principal's values, beliefs, and personal characteristics inspire people to accomplish the school's mission.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

The principal demonstrates skills that enable the school to reach its goals.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

CURRICULUM

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE	IMPROVEMENT INDICATED: MINIMAL	SOME	EXTENSIVE	PRIORITY ASSIGNED	COMPLETION DATE
There is an approved curriculum that defines what teachers are to teach and what children are to learn.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

The curriculum includes experiences that provide children with basic skills necessary to function effectively in a global society.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

The curriculum includes experiences that enable children to grow in knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of themselves and others.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

There is a plan for assessing, supervising, and monitoring the implementation of the curriculum.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

The curriculum is supported by adequate financial and material resources.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

INSTRUCTION

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE	IMPROVEMENT INDICATED:			PRIORITY ASSIGNED	COMPLETION DATE
	MINIMAL	SOME	EXTENSIVE		
The professional staff plans and provides effective instruction to accomplish the school's mission.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

Students are taught how to learn and to value learning.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

The instructional program assures the attainment of desired student outcomes.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE	IMPROVEMENT INDICATED:			PRIORITY ASSIGNED	COMPLETION DATE
	MINIMAL	SOME	EXTENSIVE		
The school has an effective staff development program for all members of the staff.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

The professional staff recognizes the need for continuing, voluntary professional development activities that promote personal growth.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE	IMPROVEMENT INDICATED:			PRIORITY ASSIGNED	COMPLETION DATE
	MINIMAL	SOME	EXTENSIVE		
The school's environment encourages the capabilities and emphasizes the worth of all individuals.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE	IMPROVEMENT INDICATED:			PRIORITY ASSIGNED	COMPLETION DATE
	MINIMAL	SOME	EXTENSIVE		
Evaluation data are used to improve the school's programs.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

Student assessment and evaluation are based on mastery of defined objectives of the curriculum.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

A fair and systematic procedure is followed for the evaluation of all staff members.					

PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT

Person(s) Responsible _____

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NAESP
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
1615 Duke Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314